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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST
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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 6 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its resumed seventy-first regular session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 July 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 38, 39, 40, 67, 74 and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its resumed seventy-first session, held in Jeddah on 3 July 1999

On 3 July 1999 the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) resumed its seventy-first regular session, which had begun on 12 June 1999 at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and current Chairman of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Mr. Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed developments with respect to the regional, inter-Arab and international political and security issues of concern to GCC member States.

The Council commended the boundary agreement signed by the United Arab Emirates and Oman on 2 May 1999 as a source of support for the course taken by the GCC and a concrete expression of the ties of brotherhood and affection that link the two countries. It wished the two fraternal peoples further advancement and prosperity under their inspired leaders.

Political issues

Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council reviewed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait. It again expressed regret that the Iraqi Government was continuing to defy resolutions having the force of international law and to reject the initiatives taken and proposals made at the inter-Arab and international levels for efforts

to be made in cooperation with the United Nations with a view to lifting the international economic embargo being maintained against Iraq and ending the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The Council recalled the relevant resolutions of the Arab Summit Conference held at Cairo in June 1996, the statement issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Arab States at their consultative meeting held at Cairo on 24 January 1999 and Security Council resolution 949 (1994). It affirmed that the Iraqi Government must comply with all the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait, specifically those concerning genuine cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross for the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages, the return of Kuwaiti property, and an undertaking to refrain from any act of provocation or aggression against Kuwait and neighbouring States in order to promote security and stability in the region.

The Council reaffirmed its demand that the Iraqi Government should cooperate fully with the United Nations in the implementation of all the relevant Security Council resolutions and that it should take the necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards Kuwait and its other neighbours by acknowledging that its invasion of Kuwait had been a violation of the relevant pan-Arab and international covenants, such as the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League and the Charter of the United Nations.

Recalling the well-established positions taken by the GCC member States and given their responsibilities at the pan-Arab, regional and international levels, the Council again expressed genuine empathy with the fraternal Iraqi people in the suffering it was enduring because of its Government's policies. It affirmed its determination to pursue the initiatives and efforts in which it was involved with a view to ending that suffering, notwithstanding the Iraqi regime's rejection of those initiatives and efforts. The Council also affirmed the importance of preserving the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

<u>The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran</u>

The Council reviewed recent developments in relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the context of the well-known and well-established positions of the GCC States. They were convinced of the importance of establishing good relations with that country based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, regard for common interests, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, the renunciation of the threat or use of force and the settlement of ongoing disputes through dialogue and by other peaceful means.

The Council renewed its commitment to and support for the position taken by the United Arab Emirates in its repeated appeals for a peaceful solution to the issue of the occupation of its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, in order to build confidence and strengthen security and stability in the region. The Council affirmed that the settlement of the dispute would

promote the development and strengthening of relations of cooperation between the GCC member States and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Council heard a statement from the United Arab Emirates to the effect that provocative Iranian intrusions onto its islands and violations of its airspace were continuing up to the present time.

The Council also heard details of the talks that had been held with the Iranian President, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Khatami, during his visits to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, when emphasis had been placed on the importance of direct negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates on the question of the three islands. The Council conveyed its gratitude to Saudi Arabia and to Qatar for the efforts they had made in connection with the talks, and it voiced satisfaction at the views expressed by the Iranian President during the talks.

As it welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to embark on direct negotiations with the United Arab Emirates, the Council decided to establish a ministerial committee comprising Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the GCC Secretary-General to devise a mechanism for initiating those negotiations, so as to resolve the issue of Iran's occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates by peaceful means, and to submit a report on the outcome of their contacts to the Leaders at their next consultative meeting.

The Council expressed its full solidarity with the position taken by the United Arab Emirates, and it affirmed the country's sovereignty over the three islands and the Council's rejection of their occupation.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council reviewed developments in the peace process in the Middle East in the light of the results of the Israeli elections. It considered the possible repercussions of the results for a process that had been faltering because of the policies of the Likud Government and its leader, Netanyahu, policies that had repudiated the relevant United Nations resolutions as well as the agreements concluded and the obligations to which they had given rise. Renewing its total commitment to the principles established by the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, by virtue of which there had been a series of gains and achievements on the road to peace, the Council calls upon the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, to take the steps necessary to relaunch the peace process and to return to serious and balanced negotiations with the Arab parties on all the various tracks.

The Council urged the new Israeli Government to take action to revive the peace process and to resume negotiations on all tracks. This may be conducive to the restoration of legitimate Arab rights in compliance with the principles of the Madrid Conference and in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978); to the attainment by the Palestinian people of all its legitimate national rights, including the right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital; and to full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including withdrawal from the Syrian Golan heights to the boundary lines of 4 June 1967 and withdrawal from

southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and without restrictions or conditions.

The Council condemned and deplored the repeated Israeli aerial assaults that had sought to destroy civilian installations and the infrastructure of the Lebanese Republic, had left a number of innocent civilians dead and wounded and had undermined security and stability in the region. The Council calls upon the international community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to intervene in order to require Israel to comply with the April 1996 understanding and put an end to bellicose practices that are to be regarded as a flagrant violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Council appreciates the efforts made by the co-sponsors of the peace process as well as the declaration adopted on 25 March 1999 by the European Union at the Berlin European Council affirming the unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the option of a State. It calls upon the countries concerned to play an ever more effective role and to urge the new Israeli Government to comply with the undertakings given to the Arab side by previous Israeli governments and to resume the negotiations on the Syrian track from the point at which they were suspended in 1996, as also on the Lebanese track, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and just peace and security and stability for the region and its peoples.

The Council values the positive and constructive efforts of the co-sponsors of the peace process in the Middle East and the continued endeavours of the United States Administration for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. It also appreciates the role being played by the member States of the European Union and commends their declaration of 25 March 1999. The Council calls on the international community and all the parties concerned to intensify their efforts during this important and critical phase to help revive the peace process and place it back on track with a view to achieving peace and meeting the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region.

The situation in Kosovo

The Council reviewed developments in the situation in Kosovo and expressed deep pain at the sufferings, expulsions and killings of the inhabitants of the area at the hands of the brutal Serbian forces. The Council welcomes the recent peace agreement as a first step towards a solution to the conflict and the return of the Kosovar refugees to their homes, an end to the fighting, and the restoration of security and stability and of the right of the inhabitants to live in peace.

Pakistan and India

The Council noted with great concern the military escalation in Jammu and Kashmir involving the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India.

The Council calls upon the two neighbours to exercise self-restraint and have recourse to reason and wisdom in solving the problems between them by peaceful means and without the threat or use of force, which can only bring them the gravest losses in human, material and moral terms. The Council commended

the Pakistani position, which is committed to negotiations with a view to achieving peace and stability.

The Council invites the United Nations to assume a role in halting the fighting and to reinforce the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The issue of Kashmir must be resolved on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions if peace is to be preserved and security ensured in the south Asia and Indian Ocean region.

The Council urges the two countries to enter into bilateral negotiations in order to eliminate the reasons for the current tension, to step up the ongoing bilateral contacts and negotiations between them and to respond to the diplomatic contacts and initiatives under way, and particularly those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in order to defuse the crisis, restore calm and stability to the two countries and peoples and thus strengthen international peace and security.

The Lockerbie issue

The Council welcomed the suspension of the United Nations sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and it commended the efforts of Saudi Arabia and South Africa to find a just solution to the issue.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council once more called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council again affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.